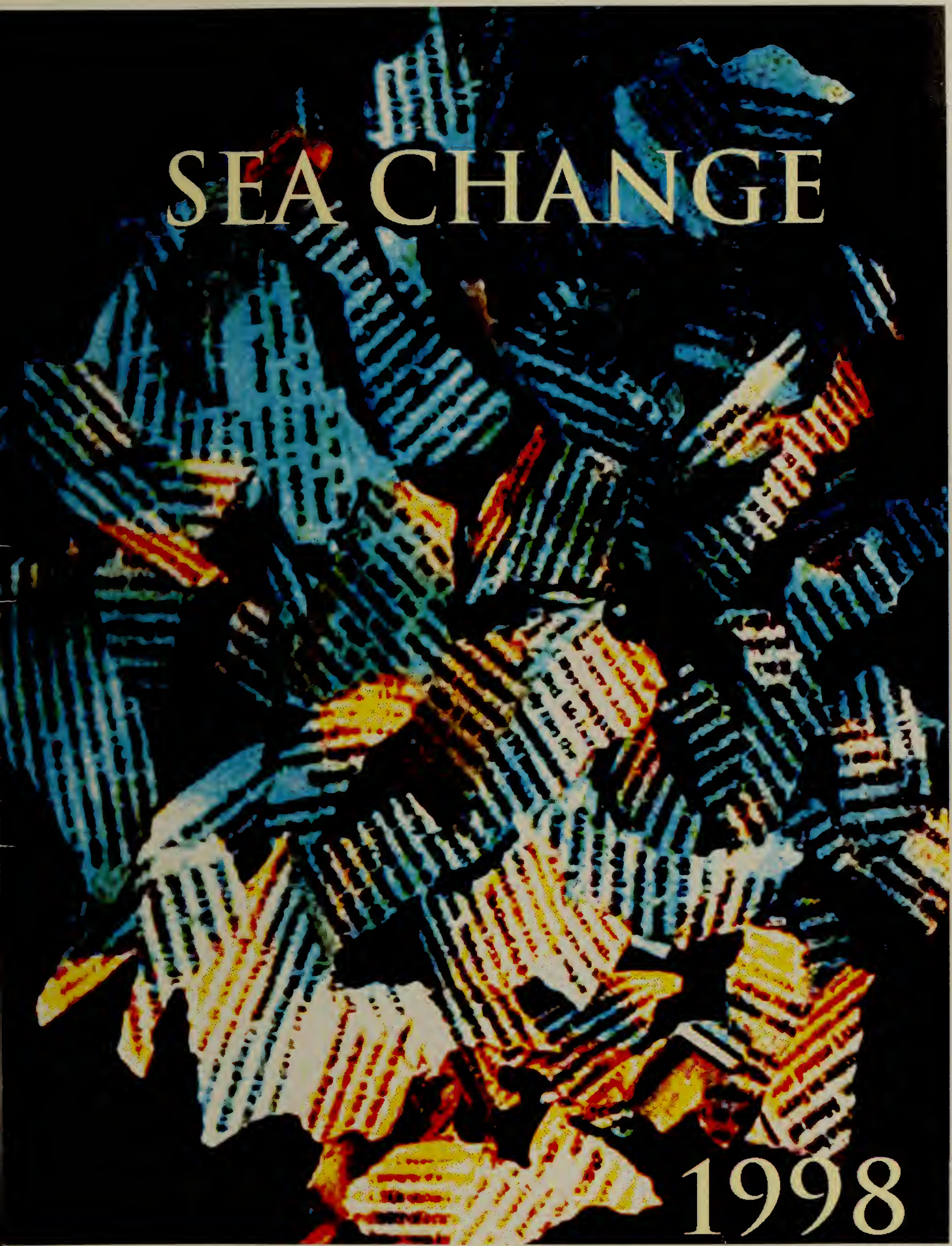
SEA CHANGE



1998

Sea Change 1998

Magazine of the Arts
Cape Cod Community College
Volume 29

The Tempest

Full Fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
Both doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong!
Hark! Now I hear them, Ding-dong, bell!

William Shakespeare, The Tempest,
Act I, Scene II

Denis Pundik

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DEDICATION

In Memory

This Issue of Sea Change
Is Dedicated
To the Memory of
Culver Tilden -

Gentleman, Patron and Friend

EDITORIAL

Janet Thornton

Over one hundred literary works were submitted from the student body for consideration in this year's magazine. All making inclusion making the task of selection a sweet and sour experience. The panel of readers is to be congratulated on its diligent and objective choices.

Submissions of art work were many and varied. They represent some aspects of the art work that may be pursued on campus.

Recognition must be given to the design team for bringing literature and art together in a format that reflects the diverse talents of the college community.

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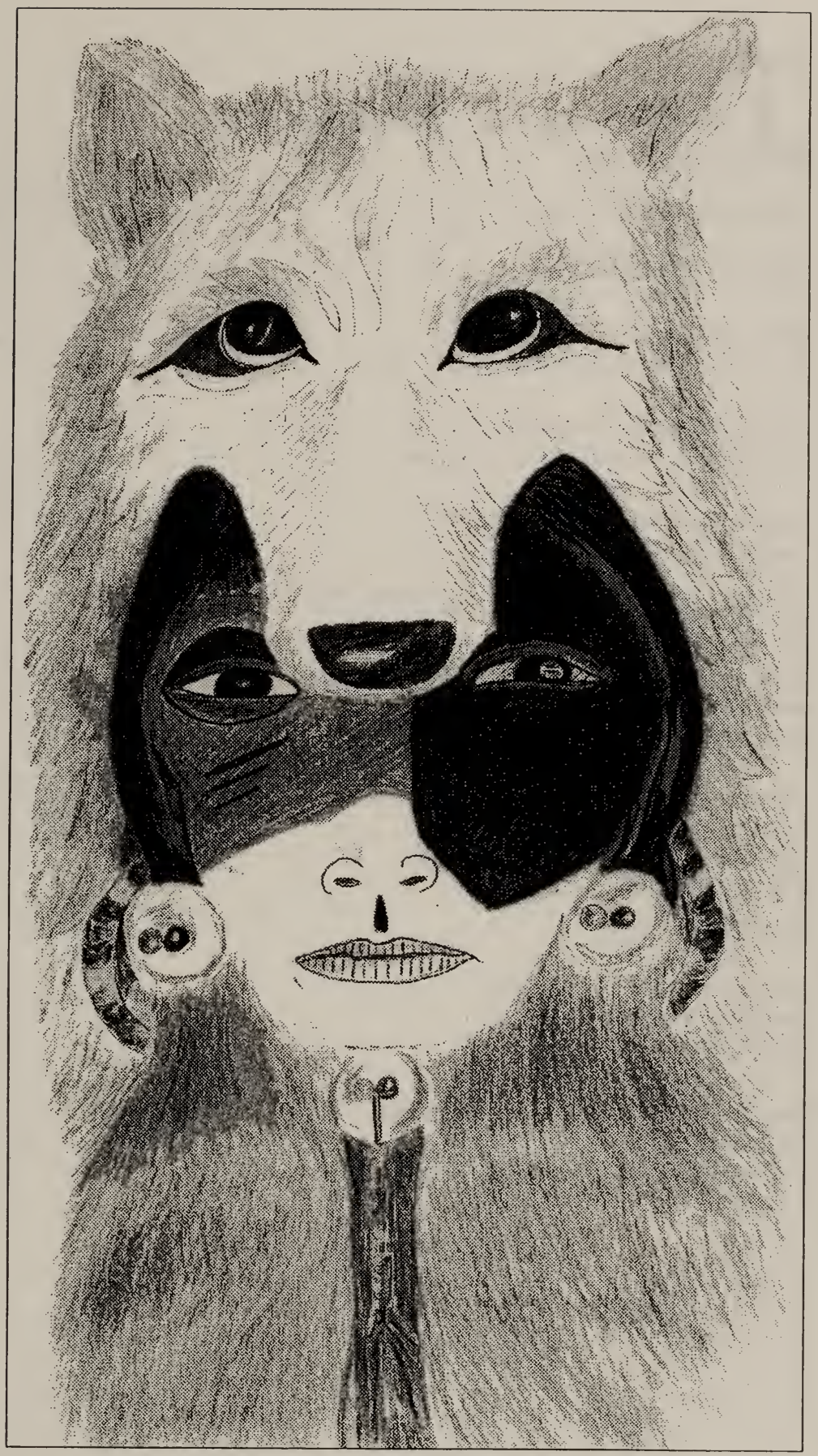


Maureen Soter

The Day The World Ended At Kourion

Jadene Felina Stevens

Cyprus July 21, 365 A.D.

They were in their bedroom.

A bone hairpin adorned her head.
A bronze ring encircled his finger.

She was a woman of nineteen
clutching her year-old child to her breast.

The child grasped its mother's elbow
nestled against her.

Over them lay a man of twenty-eight
who had tried to shield them
from a deadly rain of limestone blocks-
some weighing as much as 300 pounds ...
an earthquake rose from the ocean floor.

Their house exploded.

The tsunami thrashed coasts as far away
as Greece to the west
Alexandria to the east.

The woman's neck was snapped.
The man's skull was crushed.
The child's bones splintered.

Their brittle skeletons still clinging together
sixteen centuries later
as scientists gently brush away the debris.

The photographer records their touching humanity
their enduring affection ...
and I wonder,
in those last moments

if you and I would have been found
in such an embrace

or as scattered bones
separate impressions on the dirt floor
caught off balance
running for the door?

Received the Erika Mumford Award sponsored by the New England Poetry Club

The Birthday Cake

Ellen Ramsay

A chip of paint fluttered to the ground as Max Harper used his foot to knock on his neighbor's old screen door, his hands busy holding two cups of hot coffee.

"I'm coming ... hold your horses," Jim Murphy yelled, as he slowly shuffled to the kitchen. Arthritis had recently settled into his knees, hindering the pace of his walk. "Max, good to see ya ... come on in!"

"Stopped at Dunkin' Donuts ... couldn't handle another cup of that stuff you call coffee," Max said, setting the cups down on the kitchen table and taking a seat. "What's new?"

"Not much. Got my daughter Jill stopping by with the kids later ... it's the little one's birthday."

"Checking up on you?" Max asked as he opened the white plastic coffee cup lid with his teeth.

"Yeah, since Millie's death last year she keeps a pretty good eye on me ... thinks I'm a helpless old man living alone who can't survive without a woman around."

"From one old widower to another ... you are helpless," Max laughed.

A young-looking seventy-five, Max enjoyed every moment of life. Known as the catch of the neighborhood by the local widows, with his silver hair and John Wayne looks, Max had adapted well to widowhood ... much better than Jim. When Millie died, part of Jim's spirit went with her. Max could still see the hurt in his friend's eyes.

"I'll show my daughter ... found a box of cake mix and can of frosting in the cupboard this morning ... I'm going to make little Amanda a cake," Jim said as he sipped his coffee.

"Ever bake one before?"

"Nope, can't be that hard ... I've seen Millie bake hundreds," Jim said, making his way over to the box.

Preheat the oven to 350.

"Easy enough ... one dial goes to 350 and the other to ... uh oh ... bake or broil?"

"My guess would be bake, old man. You bake a cake ... you don't broil it,"
Max suggested as he turned his head to avoid laughing.

"O.K., the red light's on, the oven must be ready. What's next?"

Grease pan generously with shortening; lightly flour.

"I know we have some pans somewhere." Jim opened and closed the old wooden cabinet doors with a fury. "Any ideas, Max? When you're through laughing, that is!"

Max told his friend that the logical place for pans would be near the stove.

"Got 'em. Now what's shortening?"

Max shrugged his shoulders and watched Jim rummaging through the cupboards. "Hey here's the flour. Maybe if I use a little extra I won't need shortening. I think a cup of flour ought to do it. Now what?"

Mix cake mix, water, oil and eggs* in large bowl at low speed until moistened, beat 2 minutes at medium speed.

"O.K., now ... a bowl?" Jim said, beginning opening all the cabinets again.

"There's a bowl filled with plastic fruit on top of the refrigerator," Max said, dumping the fruit on the counter. "Looks pretty clean."

"O.K., here we go! Cake mix ... got it, water ... got it, oil ... what kind of oil? We have vegetable oil, corn oil, olive oil, canola oil ..."

"Got some motor oil in my trunk," Max added.

"Not funny, you old goat. Are you going to help me with this or not?"

"Fine ... I'd use olive oil ... heard it's the healthiest."

"Get me three eggs," Jim said as he grabbed the box and continued with the directions. "What's the star next to the eggs?"

*If desired, substitute 3 egg whites or ¾ cup frozen cholesterol-free egg product, thawed, for the eggs. Increase water to 1½ cups and omit oil.

"I don't think so ... we better stick to the regular recipe. Wait, there's another star ..."

*High altitude (above 3500 feet): Add 1/3 cup flour to dry cake mix and increase water by 2 tbls. Follow basic recipe directions.

"Boston isn't high altitude, but what's a tbls.?"

"Tablespoon ... you old fool ... basic high school math class. Got a few shells in here," Max said, pointing to the batter.

"Just grab the big pieces, the small ones will be beaten in with the mixer. Shit ... the mixer?"

"I saw it near the cake pans," Max said. "Say ... Doris from across the street called me this morning to say that Betty's daughter, Melissa came out of the closet."

"What's she doing in a closet?"

"Means she's gay ... a lesbian ... likes girls ... and she's decided to tell the world. Don't you keep up on things?"

"Guess not. You're starting to sound like an old busy-body Max. Here's the mixer, but where are the damn blades?"

"My wife used to keep them in a drawer with all the wooden spoons and utensils, but what does this old busy-body know?"

"Ah ... here we go ... now plug her ..."

Max wiped batter from his face. "You've managed to hit almost every spot in the damn kitchen, you old fool."

"We'll clean later. I have to mix for two minutes ... one chimpanzee ... two chimpanzee ... three chimpanzee ..."

Pour batter into pan.

"Done ... but one pans full and the other is only half full," Jim said as he held up the pans of batter.

"I think it's O.K., just put the big one on the bottom," Max said.

"Where's the box? I need to know how long to cook it. It's not 13x9 inch, it's either an 8 inch or 9 inch, wait ... what's a bundt pan?"

"Probably shaped like a baseball ..."

"Max, you imbecile ... b-u-n-d-t, not b-u-n-t."

"Did you catch any of last night's Red Sox game? They choked in the eighth inning ... no wonder they were first to be eliminated from the playoffs."

"My cake is cooking without a timer and you're worried about a team that can't hit their way out of a paper bag!"

"Look at the box, Jim; they all cook for around thirty minutes. Set the timer, and we'll check it in half an hour. Let's catch the noon news ... they'll show the highlights of the game."

The deafening sound of the smoke alarm soon jolted the men from the television.

"Holy shit ... look at all that smoke ... we just put the cake in ..." Jim waved his arms to try and see in the oven. "That pan is dripping all over the place."

"Wipe it up," Max said as he opened the doors and windows to let the smoke out. "Not with a sponge ... use a spatula and shovel it out."

"Hey ... pretty good. I'll just fill up the other pan ... we'll even 'em out some. Timer still says twenty minutes left of cook." Jim closed the oven door and they made their way back to the TV.

"Cake looks good ... hand me a potholder," Max said as he shut off the timer and opened the oven door.

"Can't find one ..."

"Grab a towel from the bathroom ..."

"Oh no ... the cake is stuck to the pan," Jim moaned trying to get the cake onto a plate.

"We can use the frosting to glue it back together," Max said, grabbing a knife and the can of frosting. "The frosting is melting ... Keeps sliding

of the cake ..."

"Read the box ..."

Cool cake completely before frosting.

"We'll have time to clean up your kitchen," Max said as he started to wipe the batter off the cabinet doors. "We did a pretty good job, just us men. We don't need women."

"Right ..." Jim said, his voice cracking as he turned away from Max. "Millie would be proud ..."

Music Man

Michael Sampson

Old man breathes
Air dances through coils
Music fills the hall
Pain fills his heart

Passionate fingers dance on keys
Moving without thought
The man forgets for a little while
What he once lost

Happiness eluded in life
Repenting of the soul
Now painfully thin
Hellhound on his trail

Each furious note
Hardly encompasses the man
His whole life running
Running to stand

John Glorioso

Hitchhiker's Thumbnail Sketch

Lee Nemmers

In 1971, I left my teenage blues behind in New York and hitchhiked to Berkeley, California with my boyfriend, Stan. In Nevada, spraining my ankle, I first questioned Stan's character. "If you can't keep up, just go home!" he said, and sprinted toward the ride.

We moved into a boarding house above a soul food restaurant. The rooms held eight restless souls: a robust gay ex-nun always sang while baking bread; a studious astronomy writer sold astrology charts to college students; the leprechaun--short, silent, dirty-- grew psychedelic mushrooms in the closet; a shifty ex-con paid rent by selling homemade artists' easels; the cartoonist, sharing a room with his anorexic girlfriend (a mere shadow of herself), printed weekly comics in underground newspapers. Stan paid rent by hawking his records shipped from New York. We all shared one bathroom, kitchen, and small living room, with a skylight illuminating a marijuana plant attached to a long pulley.

Restless, I took yoga, weaving and typing classes at a free college. I soon dropped typing. I met a seedy old man selling violins one afternoon at a fund raiser flee market on campus. He gave me his card and said, "Stop by, I'll give you a free one." I wove a small scenic tapestry. Arriving days later, I handed him the weaving, but he was clearly disappointed; he'd hoped for something else. Rummaging in his attic, he returned with a battered violin case. He held on when I tried to take it, leering at me, still looking for a different reward. Excusing myself, I hastily left.

Months later, I discovered Stan sleeping with a friend of mine. Sticking out my thumb, home-baked bread and old fiddle in hand, with my astrology chart pocketed and two good ankles, I headed home alone.

Lost

June Chamillard

We slowly walked down
the nursing home hall
together
My sister and I
looking for our father

He came upon us
aimlessly
looking lost
without his teeth
he didn't know who we were
but welcomed us
with "Who are you?"

We walked with him to the TV room
and awkwardly sat down ...
with his combed white head
safely between us
he took each of our hands
tightly in each of his
and we three sat peacefully together
as he nodded off
sitting up

He opened his eyes a while later
and looked at our hands in his
and paused ...
then asked, "Is this for real?"

We talked to him of younger years
when we were all a family
and he sadly said, "That was long ago."

I asked him
if he knew any jokes
he quietly replied
"I am no longer funny."
His nose needed a Kleenex
which my sister gave to him
and he held it in his hands
and asked "What is this for?"

I put my arm
around his shrunken shoulders
and stroked his sunken cheek ...

We walked slowly down the hall
my sister and I
our father
between us
until
we three stood in the dining room entrance
looking around at the white-haired crowd
and he frantically asked "Where will we sit?"

My sister and I
gently sat our father down at the table
and while he eagerly awaited his meal
we silently
slipped away ...

Hang Time

Gaelen Green

"So, I don't think I told you I'm going to Germany." She dropped her sandwich onto the paper plate and turned to look at him directly.

"No! That's great! When are you doing that?"

"At the end of the month. Well, the very beginning of September, actually."

"Cool. How'd you manage to swing that, after all the time you've taken this summer coming to visit me? Your boss must be ready to kill you!" He grinned and cupped his hand on her knee, rubbing his palm back and forth along her shorts line. She put her hand over his until he stopped.

"Oh, I told them something about making up the time, and they seemed okay with it. Most of my visits up here have been sick days, anyway."

"You're amazing! So is it another trip with Elizabeth? You two're just world travelers these days." He leaned forward and kissed her neck, then reached for his drink, raising the bottle in a half salute before tilting it back to finish the beer.

She pushed her plate away from the table edge and lined it up in a row with her glass and an empty beer bottle. Before answering, she brushed the front of her shorts, flipping a few crumbs onto the deck.

"Well, actually, you know, I'm going with Dylan, my ex-boyfriend. You remember me talking about him," she paused and glanced at his face. "I know it's a little weird; that's why I hadn't told you yet. I didn't want to say anything over the phone."

"Oh, uh-huh." He pushed his sandwich into his mouth and started to chew.

"It's not like we're going like together or anything. I mean, he's my ex-boyfriend for a reason. God, he can be such an old man at times - he's so afraid of food poisoning we'll end up eating at McDonald's instead of enjoying bratwurst or schnitzel - it's not like it'll be that much fun. He just didn't have anyone else to travel with."

She picked at the remains of her sandwich, twisting the rye bread into little balls between her fingers, then letting them fall onto the plate. When she looked at him again, he was staring past the table at the deck where it emerged from the shadow of the umbrella.

"Like, he's paying for just about everything except my plane ticket even though we're not going out, and Germany sounds exciting, someplace I've never been. I figured it's a good way of getting out of here for a while, you know?"

"Yeah, sure. I wouldn't say Germany's top on my list of places to go, though."

"Well ... I guess you're right. It's certainly not anything like the wonderful green hills of Vermont, or for that matter, that mess I've left behind in the city. It's just different, and Dylan needed someone to go with him; he couldn't get any of his friends to go, he really tried," she hurried on. "It's for an art show, the reason we're going, I mean, and it only happens once every five years, some really avant-garde thing. Pretty cool, right?"

"Sure."

"Anyway, so what do you think? Are you upset? I know it's pretty strange, and kinda sudden."

"I dunno," he said, then laughed shortly.

"You know me, give me a couple of days and I'll know how I feel then." He tapped the perforated metal table top with his right hand, shifted upright in his chair and felt around in his pockets for his cigarettes. He pulled one out and lit it carefully with his lighter so that it would draw evenly. He watched the smoke float up to the umbrella's mesh panels.

She examined her fingernails, curling her fingers towards the palm and searching for hangnails or little cracks in the paint. He leaned back in his chair and stretched his legs out; from the corner of her eye she could see his calves, tan until the line where his construction boots would reach. His pale bare feet looked as if they were underwater. They sat that way while he finished his cigarette. She swallowed another bite or two of the sandwich and pushed the potato chips around on the plate. After he took one last drag on his cigarette and dropped the butt into an empty beer bottle, he stood up abruptly and entered the house. The screen door banged shut in his wake.

Eventually, she roused herself from the chair. She gathered the remains of their dinner and followed him inside.

"That was a good turkey sandwich you made," she called into the house. "That was fun."

"Mmph," he responded. He lay on the couch in the family room with a book open on his chest, one arm slung over his face. Above his cutoffs, his white t-shirt had crumpled up on his body so the mountain logo on the front became a blur of lines. His skin showed softly between the top of his shorts and the t-shirt. She sat on the hardwood floor next to him and kissed the patch of skin. He didn't move.

"You know, I didn't know what to do about this trip. I mean, when Dylan asked me to go, my first instinct was to say NO, jump in my car and come up here. But I don't even know where I stand with you, I don't know even if you want me to be around, whether or not I mean anything to you. So I thought, 'hey, I don't have ties to any one guy, I'm my own person,' right? If this guy wants to take me to Europe, great! I'll go. I don't see you jumping up to take his place. Right? Right?!"

She watched his chest rise and fall evenly. The chest under the book under the t-shirt where his heart beat in syncopation with his breathing. The clock in the kitchen added a counterpoint to the rhythm.

"All right, I get it. I give up. You'll know better in a couple of days. I seriously don't know sometimes why I drag myself all the way up here from the city to spend my weekends with you. God, I mean look at you; this is what I get for a Friday night. Well, at least there's that good Vermont air and the view. I'm gonna go for a walk." She lifted herself from the floor without disturbing him and crossed the room toward the door. Instead of leaving, she lowered herself into the armchair opposite him and watched him sleep.

Joseph Emerald

"Blue, Blue Everywhere"

Judith Ciance

Our home was not a family heirloom or a custom-built house, nor did we raise any children there. It was whimsical in a special sort of way and had characteristics only we could see from the day we set foot inside. To anyone else's eyes it was a house that needed much more "tender- loving-care" than most people would give in a lifetime. It had Potential: "existing in possibility; capable of development into actuality."

This was our "new" home. We passed papers on a Friday morning and moved in Friday afternoon ... vacuum cleaner, mop and a family picture of Gramma Cora. Never did I figure we had accumulated so much "neat stuff", not to mention the truly valuable. But who cared, we were moving into the "SS Potential." Excitement was in the air. Who cared about the plastic vacuum cleaner hose that served as a drain pipe in the downstairs bathroom, or the dirty, crusty dishes that were left in the dishwasher that didn't work, or the missing drawers in the pantry, or the backdoor that had to remain locked so nobody would fall through the rotten floorboards on the porch, or the yellow mushrooms that were growing from the floor behind the upstairs toilet: Who cared?

But all at once the grim shadow of reality clouded our fantasies. It was Saturday, the only whole day we had left together in our new house for the next four weeks. Sunday morning Paul was shipping out ... well, not really shipping out ... but leaving for military intelligence school with the Army Reserves. "Our" project became "O ... U ... R" project. The decisions would be over the wires and through the mail.

I made up my mind that in those four weeks, I was going to accomplish enough to make a significant change, so that when Paul came "marching" home again the "SS Potential" would almost be ready to christen with a bottle of white Zinfandel. I sat, I looked, I studied, I designed, I added it up....I sat, I looked, I studied, I designed, I didn't bother to add it up. I can't tell you how many times I changed those plans: The best laid plans of rats and boys. I decided that no matter what course of action was to be taken, the first step was to become a one-person demolition crew.

It was the greatest feeling to gather all past frustrating thoughts, pick up the crowbar, and just swing away. As the dust settled, I stood back wondering if this was how it was done in the movies--but they used props. At that point I was not going to "add it up" again.

After I released all my frustrations, the spirit of reality was beginning to seep back through the ripped down wall board and horsehair plaster. It was now Thursday, and I was beginning to feel a little apprehensive and alone, sitting aboard a sinking ship. If only the telephone was hooked up. It was unsettling to be disconnected from reality.

Friday morning started as usual. Up, shower, dress, off to work. Being one of those people who relied on modern inventions, I was delighted to know that a telephone would be again within my reach when I arrived home that evening. I decided that since my uncle would be there to let the phone company in, I would take some time to acquaint myself with the local Super Stop and Shop. The stale cookies and moldy peach in the fridge just weren't going to make that night ... some shrimp from the deli or a hot barbecued chicken sounded better. I indulged myself in a bouquet of pink, yellow and purple mums with a spray of white baby breath ...

Oh, how the darkness can play tricks on you. The first thing I did when I unlocked the

front door was to seek out my new phone and listen to that alluring dial tone. I felt like Columbus sailing over the oceans in search of new lands. As I cleared off a chair in the dining room, I dialed Uncle Wilson to thank him and to tell him I'd name my first son after him and Alexander Graham Bell.

My mind was still in the fast lane and working overtime. It was time to survey and imagine my new ideas for the open spaces in the kitchen. An episode from "Murder She Wrote" greeted me on the threshold and uncomfortable feeling crept over me that I was being watched. I briefly glanced toward the far right corner and noticed the backdoor was ajar, the door that hadn't been opened, never mind unlocked, since we moved in. Sherlock Holmes sprang into action. With the adrenaline flowing freely and my heart pumping feverishly, I dashed across the floor, pulled the door shut, and breathed a sigh of relief. I had no explanation for the open door, but that was okay with me as long as I wasn't keeping company with an unwanted intruder.

I still hadn't flipped the kitchen switch, and it was at that moment the same grim feeling crept over me again. I glanced up and across the room. I noticed the cellar door was cracked slightly open and a beam of light was reflecting through.

The open backdoor ... the cellar door ajar ... the obvious light on in the cellar ... I was convinced that I was definitely not home alone. Then I remembered some of the "cop" stories I had heard over the years. Being married to a police officer, my first instinct was to be brave and check it out. My head leaned in the direction of the cellar door but my feet made a beeline for the dining room. Sitting on the dining room table was my new link to civilization. I quickly picked up the receiver to the soothing sound of a dial tone. Nobody had tampered with the wires. On the floor in the dining room was my trusty crowbar. I was now fully armed to face any consequence.

The number I dialed was automatic ... the police station. I remained very calm and collected as I spoke to the officer on the other end. At least, I thought I was in complete control. I finally broke down and with only short quick breaths in between sentences, I was able to detail my last traumatic hour. Although it seemed as though eternity had come and gone, I had only been on the phone for several minutes. I had always heard of the police brotherhood during emergencies within their own "families." Within minutes, the house was surrounded by cruisers. Policemen were everywhere.

The interior "staterooms" being beautiful and elegant to us, were quite the opposite to those unable to possess and appreciate our visions of grandeur. I knew all but one of the officers who responded to the call. "A possible break-in in progress at a PO's house." The one I didn't know was the one who asked if anything was missing. The first thing that came to mind was Paul's handgun, so I replied, "Check for Paul's gun!"

"A gun, who has got a gun?" He whipped around to face me.

I sheepishly walked behind an officer, as I directed him towards our bedroom. I gestured toward the drawer in the nightstand. To my relief, the gun was there.

Next thing I knew, one of the officers was handing me a blue flashlight and asking if it belonged to us. I stood shaking my head, unable to speak. He told me he found it lit on one of the rafters in the cellar. Instant panic. I was sure I was the victim of an unwanted stowaway. The blue

brigade continued to search the house, from the cellar to the attic. They assured me a route man would ride by the house periodically throughout the night. Convinced there was nobody hiding anywhere, they departed. I thanked them and again I was alone.

A cup of tea didn't work--nothing was calming my nerves. There it was ... my trusted "new" telephone. I called some nearby friends, explained what happened, grabbed my pocketbook and went over to their house for the night.

The morning light gave me renewed courage to venture back on board. Nothing had changed ... the boxes still piled ... the wallboard still piled ... the dust still piled. The difference was that the scary night shadows had disappeared.

My telephone was still sitting where I left it. I called my uncle to let him know what happened to me. As I started to tell him the story, he stopped me and told me to listen. It seemed that curiosity had gotten the best of him. He had checked out the back porch to see if he could make it usable, had come in and had not closed the door. One down. As for the cellar, it seemed that the when the telephone man went down there to connect the phone line, the light switch at the top of the stairs didn't work. He had to use his flashlight, and since he needed two hands, he had balanced the blue beacon on one of the rafters. Meanwhile, my uncle was at the top of the stairs playing with the switch. And what do you know ... it went on.

The days came and went and everything remained as normal, as normal could be aboard the "SS Potential." Four weeks had passed and "Paulie" came marching home again.

Corinne Young

SOLITUDE

Dan MacLeod

Brown pine needles crunch softly
beneath my feet.
Above in the blue a hawk circles,
sunlight illumines her wings
while far off a plane engine drones
& cuts out into silence.

- A pilot glides upon spring breezes -

Along a wooded path I wander
where I meet a woman on a horse
we chat
& she lets me know of a clearing
where I can read.

Solitary in nature,
I feel less alone
than when I linger
among crowds of an institution.

FAREWELLS

Joan E. Medeiros

Each time the harsh odor of disinfectant assaults my senses, my chest tightens and my jaw clenches. Painful memories wash over me and I am transported back to the nursing home where my mother spent her last months. The disinfectant is meant to destroy the stench of urine mixed with vomit, sweat, overcooked hospital food, and, most of all, sickness and death. However, it fails miserably.

My mother's room is like all the other rooms in the nursing home, save for a slash of red and black across the foot of her bed from an afghan she made years ago, a golden stuffed bear perched by her pillow for company, and several pictures of our family.

Mom, always petite, appears lost beneath the covers of her bed. Her lively brown eyes are dulled by illness and fear. She was always the one in charge and now everything is out of her control. Sitting on the edge of the bed, I take her hand in mine. Her skin is as dry and hot as a desert wind. Speckled with brown age spots, the skin of her hand is so paper thin I can see the veins beating beneath the surface.

The squeal of a walker as it moves across the tile floor outside her door has the same effect as fingernails scraping across a chalkboard; it makes me cringe. Down the hall drifts a feeble, lost voice, "help me ... please help me."

Mom looks at me. Her eyes remind me of those of a terrified doe caught in the glaring headlights of an oncoming car. She looks around the room that has become a cell for a once vibrant woman, now imprisoned in a failing body. Looking at me once more, she clutches my hand tighter. "Take me home", she whispers, "please take me home."

"I can't Mom," I whisper back, my eyes burning with unshed tears.

Angrily pulling her hand from mine, she whispers, "You could if you wanted to." Turning away from me onto her side, she dismisses me from her hell.

Leaving the room without another word, I keep swallowing, fighting back the tears that want to pour out. As I walk towards the elevator, I can hear the hushed voices f the nurses as they go about their duties, a distant cough of a patient, a moan, and then closer, soft crying. "Is my mother the one crying?" I wonder.

Reaching the elevator, I jab the down button, hoping that it hurries. The doors make a soft swish as they open. Grateful that the elevator is empty, I step in and press the first floor button. As the doors close, I lean my forehead against the smooth, cool stainless steel and let the tears fall. Echoing through my mind are my mother's words, "take me home...you could if you wanted to." I can taste the slight saltiness of my tears against my lips.

We never speak of my mother coming home again, but her words hang between us. When she dies alone in the nursing home a few weeks later, my mind keeps returning to that day. I know that I could not have taken her home. The doctor made it clear that she was too ill to be cared for at home. My father reassured me that it was impossible and that Mom knew that, but I can't help but wonder if she died believing that I had let her down.

DOROTHY

Pebo Bohannon

The workers gave me a bottle
found while digging the dirt up
to find the water pipes beneath
my precious garden.

A perfume vial of an uncertain age
with the worn glamour of a style
in a younger day.

The fusty brass cap
dressed a glass stopper
to lay a scent upon my wrists
or breasts
or behind an ear.

Did I feel the lingering of secret passion
from many years ago ...
or was it only the seeping dew from my precious
dug-up garden?

Ode To Spam

Michael W. Lemieux

What can't I say, it boggles the mind
It comes in a can, what next will I find?

Peel off the top, let the aroma arise
But don't leave it out, it will attract flies.

Turn upside down, give the bottom a bump
Hear the thud on the plate of that gelatin lump.

Take out the skillet but don't get too brazen
Cook it up right and the family will be praisin'.

It's a wonder of science this mystery meat
The can it comes in is square and it's neat.

Three cheers from the kids when the can just appears
Invite all the friends and crack open the beers!

Where would man be without this soother of souls
Cut it in cubes and serve it in bowls.

Make it a burger, have it with eggs
Serve it to the pals while reading through Jegs.

A meat this versatile just boggles the mind
It has other uses what next will I find?

A patch for a tube, a source of chain lube
A liner for your shoe or use it as glue.

Who needs fun tack with spam in the house
If it falls off the wall just leave it for the mouse.

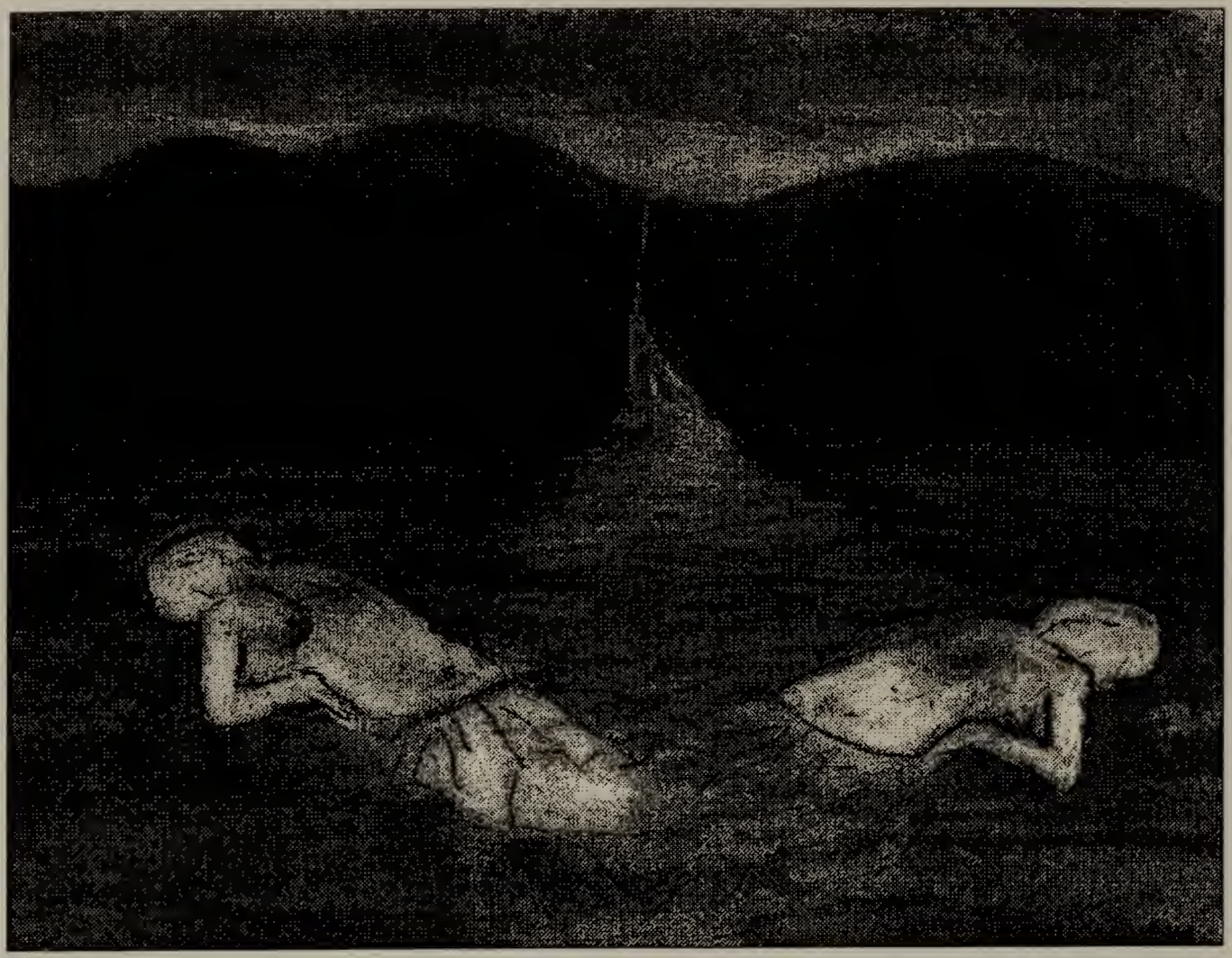
Spam is your pal through good times and bad
Damned if it ain't the best lunch meat I've had.

Send the kids off to school with Spam in the sack
And you can be sure they won't bring it back.

It's a curious blend of amalgams it seems
The research was done by a hundred man team.

There's no need to question its shimmer and gleam
Something like this could only come from a dream.

Yes Spam is a miracle; keep it on hand
It's that wonder of science in the little blue can!



Liz Bolinder

Bog

Dennis Martin

Once a year it drowns
So that the berries may rise
To birth in red tide.

Scott Fernald

Sheila Bucchino

The Rainbow Connection

Jerry Schmeer

"Why are there so many songs about rainbows and what's on the other side ..."
(Kermit the Frog)

Every dream has a beginning. A time when the seed of an idea ...a hope ...a belief, blossoms into three-dimensional reality in the mind of its creator. I believe that it is in that instant, that moment of creation, that the success or failure of the dream is simultaneously determined. The more vivid the moment, the more enhanced the sensory detail, the greater the chances of that dream becoming a reality. My dream began one cold, dark, snowy, whistling winter night on Cape Cod.

It was raining that afternoon. I had the day off from work, nothing to do, so I decided to get lost in the world of the Muppet Movie. I didn't care that the matinee was going to be filled with hordes of cherubic demons. I didn't care that the mothers were all going to give me those funny stares as I towered over their children. I wanted to see Kermit, and I was going to see Kermit!

I loved the movie and found myself singing right along with the other kids. I really had a wonderful time. As far as I was concerned, anyone or anything that would risk it all to go off and chase their dreams, was OK by me.

By the time the movie ended, I couldn't believe how much the weather had changed. The temperature had dropped below freezing, there was at least a foot of blowing snow on the ground and the visibility was near zero. Having no boots or gloves, I ran to the car as fast as I could. It was my intention to hop into the car, crank up the heat, and then head home as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the earlier rain had gotten in every lock, nook and cranny; all the doors were frozen solid. As hard as I tried, no amount of kicking, banging, yanking or pulling could budge any of the doors open. Before I knew it, twenty minutes had passed. All the mothers had made it safely home with their children, the theater employees had all rushed off; I was standing there alone in the parking lot, freezing to death. In what could only be called a last ditch effort, I was able to force the back of the station wagon open. I climbed over the seats, started the car up, and then skillfully and slowly made my way home in what was now a complete white out; the back of the station wagon still wide open and blowing in the wind.

When I got home, I rushed into the house, quickly changed into the warmest clothes I could find, made a steaming cup of hot chocolate, wrapped myself in a thick blanket, then plopped down on the big furry couch in the living room. I honestly didn't think I'd ever warm up again. I turned on the television just in time to catch my favorite show, Magnum P.I.

As I sat there, shivering and watching the opening credits, my mind began to toggle between the movie, my winter nightmare, and the life that I saw Tom Selleck leading. Was I crazy? Here was a man who was living in a tropical paradise--a place where rainbows were a common event and the temperature seldom dropped below 70; I was sitting there freezing to death. Here was a man whose life was filled with adventure; he had all of the beautiful, bikini-clad women he could ever want, enjoyed life to the fullest, and was getting paid a fortune to do it; I was working at Radio Shack and hating it. Now Tom Selleck I'm not, but it quickly became clear to me that it was time for some drastic changes in my life. If he could do it, I could do it, and that became my dream.

After that night my life did change ¼drastically. I dropped out of Cape Cod

Community College, doubled my hours at work, joined an investment program and spent every waking hour trying to keep my mind focused on my dream. I bought every book on Hawaii I could find and subscribed to the Honolulu Star Bulletin. I watched Elvis' Blue Hawaii a dozen times and bought the album. I started a journal, called it my "Hawaii Book," then used it each day to keep track of my progress. And I never, NEVER, missed a single episode of Magnum P.I. Those characters became part of my extended family. I became obsessed. I wasn't going to let anything stop me, although a thousand things tried.

In a little over a year, I was able to save up almost $4,000.00 dollars. It was time. I gave up the last of my excuses, hopped onto a plane, and before I knew it, I was there. I WAS THERE! I couldn't believe it. One day, icy cold winds were blowing across my face, the next day it was balmy breezes. Was it really that easy?

As I stood there in the airport, I must admit, it did cross my mind for a moment that I was 5,000 miles from home, had no place to stay, didn't know a soul, had no idea where I was going to work. I didn't even know how to get to my hotel, but the moment passed and I no longer cared! I was there and somehow I was going to survive.

Thanks to my research, I knew Waikiki like the back of my hand and concentrated my efforts there. Within a couple of days I had myself a nice little apartment a block and a half from the beach and was as happy as any human could be. In the next couple of months I found a job, made some friends, had a few difficult moments; but, all in all, made it through the hard times by holding fast to my dream. I was finally ready to take the next step.

One day, while waiting for a bus, I saw a notice on a bulletin board about a new acting workshop. It was being taught by Dick Kendelon, the ex-casting director of Hawaii 5-O, and Jack Hogan, a long time actor best known for his years with Vic Morrow on the TV series Combat. Up until then, my only acting experience had been a couple of acting classes at 4C's. But, deep inside I knew that before I went knocking on Tom Selleck's front door, it might be a good idea to get a little more experience, so I joined. It was one of the smartest moves I ever made.

At the beginning, I had the wonderful opportunity to truly play the starving actor. I would often give up buying food just so I could afford my acting classes. It was a great time and I look back with fond memories. There were about eight of us in the first workshop, all with similar dreams and all working very, very hard just to keep going. We became a kind of a family, helping each other in the hard times and sharing the good times with each other. They truly were some of the nicest people I ever met and I could write ten pages just about them.

As a group, our first big break came when Universal Studios decided to make Jack Hogan the island casting director for Magnum P.I. Although it didn't guarantee us anything, it did, at least, give us a foot in the door. Once we got in, we still had to make it by producers, directors, and what seemed to be a thousand other people all wanting their say in the selection process. But at least it looked like I had a chance.

For half a year it seemed like everyone in the workshop got called in but me. Many of my friends got small roles or parts as extras. It was fun to see them on the TV. Personally, I would have killed just to spend five minutes on the set and see "the guys" in person. Ironically, that is how I got

there.

One day, while I was sitting around the apartment, the phone rang. It was Jack Hogan. Very business-like, he said, "Mr. Schmeer, we have a part we would like you to read for. It's a 16 year old boy, blond hair, a John Hinkley type. Can you be at Universal Friday?"

"Ah ... OK," I squeaked.

Heart failure. It still brings chills to my spine just thinking about it. It was Wednesday. I was 23, brown hair, and my tan needed a lot of work. I hung up the phone and ran to the store to get some Nice 'n Easy and some wire-rimmed glasses. I rushed home, bleached my hair, then headed straight to the beach to work on my tan. For the next couple of days, I didn't shave, hoping that Friday morning I would give myself the closest shave of my life and not have "five-o'clock shadow."

Being my first time, I, of course, showed up at the casting office about an hour or two early. That wasn't the smartest move on my part. I got to sit there all morning and watch a parade of handsome young men go by, all with perfect faces and smiles, all with résumé's as long as their arm; and all a hundred times more talented than I. They told me so; why should I doubt them? For those of you who haven't tried a casting call, it has got to be the most humiliating, ego-busting thing on the face of the planet.

Finally, it was my turn. I went into the producer's office where I was introduced to half a dozen people, all of whom had impressive sounding titles. I smiled, shook their hands, just like I had practiced in acting class a hundred times before. After all the formalities were over, Mr. Bellsario, the producer said,

"Jerry, can you put the glasses on?" There was a long pause as he stared at me. "No, the glasses aren't right. Take them off. Do you know any of the lines?"
I responded, "Yes sir, something like, 'Dorsey, I'm really a big fan of yours."

"OK. Thank you."

"Ah, ... Thank you, sir."

It seemed like I was in the office 10 seconds. I couldn't believe it. Years of preparation, a snap of the fingers and the dream of my life was in the wastebasket. I don't think I have ever been so depressed. I felt like jumping into the closest volcano. But, somehow, I made it back to work. Ten minutes after I got back to work the phone rang. It was Jack.

"Jerry, you got the part. Can you come by the studio Monday? I'll give you a copy of the script and show you around." Double heart attack! I don't think I had ever been as excited in my entire life. I can't even begin to describe the roller coaster ride my poor body was on.

Monday, I showed up at the studio bright and early. I met Jack and he gave me the script and told me a little more about the part. This wasn't "extra" work, this was a major role! I couldn't believe it! Jack then took me to the costume department where I was fitted with three identical costumes. Then it was off to make-up so they could match my hair color to a wig that they were going to make for my stuntman. MY STUNTMAN! I kept thinking, "Don't wake me up, don't wake me up." Then it was off into the studio where they were shooting the inside scenes of next week's show.

BANG! That's when it really hit me. There they were, right in front of me: Tom, T.C., Higgins and Rick. I could reach right out and touch them. It was like I had walked right through the TV screen. For a second, my mind flashed back to my winter nightmare. Was I really dreaming? You hear people say that often, but, for a moment, I truly wondered about reality. From there, things just became more dream-like each day.

The next morning, I arrived at the studio at five A.M. There, along with the regulars and the other guest stars, Pat Morita and Dick Butkus, I was chauffeured to Aloha Stadium to shoot the outside scenes. It rained much of that morning, so I spent most of it sitting around the dugout and sharing stories with "the guys." "THE GUYS!" Tom Selleck, Roger Mosley and Larry Manetti. It was like they were my next door neighbors. When it wasn't raining and we weren't shooting, we'd be running around the stadium playing football along with a couple of ex-pro football players Tom had as bodyguards. Every one was wonderful to me. Even the crew treated me like a star.

Eventually, it was time to work. The script of the show went something like this: my character, Walt Chambers' favorite pro-football player, Dorsey Bramlett and his team. The Blazers are having spring training camp in beautiful, sunny Hawaii. In his mind, Walt thinks he is Dorsey, so, when he sees him in person, it messes up his sense of being. In his mind, Walt decides the only way that he can correct this dilemma is to kill Dorsey. Tom joins the team to protect Dorsey, his old college friend.

In my first scene, I run up to get my hero's autograph. This is where I get my first close up, get to look crazy, and have sinister music play in the background. Let me tell you, it's hard to keep a straight face with a giant movie camera, mikes, lights, and the three guys controlling them all about a foot from your face. But somehow I do it, and the ice is broken. Over the next couple of days, we film the rest of the scenes, but most of the time we play football.

In the second scene, I try to slip by the security guard. Every time I see the show, I still get mad at this point because I mumble some of my words. Next comes my big scene. I sneak back into the stadium, run up the bleachers, put a rifle together, try to shoot the quarterback, get "blown away" and then go splat on the ground. Let me tell you, it's a lot harder than it sounds. First, I have to stay in the camera's view as I run up the bleachers. That is almost impossible. We must have filmed that about four times. Then I have to take a rifle out of my knapsack, assemble it, aim it and fire it, just as the two football teams on the field clap and break out of a huddle. There just isn't enough time. I finally talk the director into letting me leave half of the rifle behind the wall that I was shooting from. Then, finally, after getting that all right, the gun doesn't fire.

It is important to realize that while all this is happening, there are two football teams, a half-dozen major actors, and a couple of dozen crew members, all getting paid megabucks per minute, all waiting and watching me film these scenes over and over again. I really start to feel the pressure!

Then, I have to get shot properly. That's important because when the stunt man fills in, they have to be able to get a nice fluid motion from my shots to his. That doesn't go very well, either. By this time, I'm starting to wonder why I ever came up with this stupid idea.

As I start shooting my next scene, Tom

must have noticed I was feeling a bit stressed and begins telling me jokes. I think that is the thing that impressed me the most about Tom Selleck: his easy-going attitude, and his wonderful sense of humor. Tom Magnum really is Tom Selleck and vice versa. Anyway, I'm lying on the ground, supposedly dead, trying not to breathe, and Tom's telling me jokes trying to make me laugh. If that isn't enough, when he isn't successful, he gets one of those wind-up walking toys and starts it marching toward my face, live, on camera! Of course, you don't see that, but I'd love to have copies of the out-takes. You can't believe how much fun they have on the set while they are shooting.

Finally, after getting shot, they throw me on a stretcher, cover my face with a sheet, strap me down, and throw me in the back of an ambulance. As the cameras are rolling, the two attendants jump into the ambulance, turn on the siren and I hear:

"You got the keys."

"No, I thought you had the keys."

"No, I gave them to you!"

It sounds like an "Abbott and Costello" routine and there I am, strapped down in the back of the ambulance, laughing my head off.

As I look back, it's hard to believe that this whole thing started because of a movie about a little green frog and a dream. It was one of the most exciting times in my life and I know it is going to be hard to ever top that experience. But you know I'm going to try. I hope anyone who reads this is inspired to do the same, so one day you can find your Rainbow Connection, just like-

"... the lovers, the dreamers, and me."

Silent Night

Bridget E. Billings

Distant sparks flicker, and fade
On the periphery of the universe.
Though I do not feel
The loss of each small, brilliant flame
I know that somewhere
A world has gone dark
And its sorrow
Touches me.

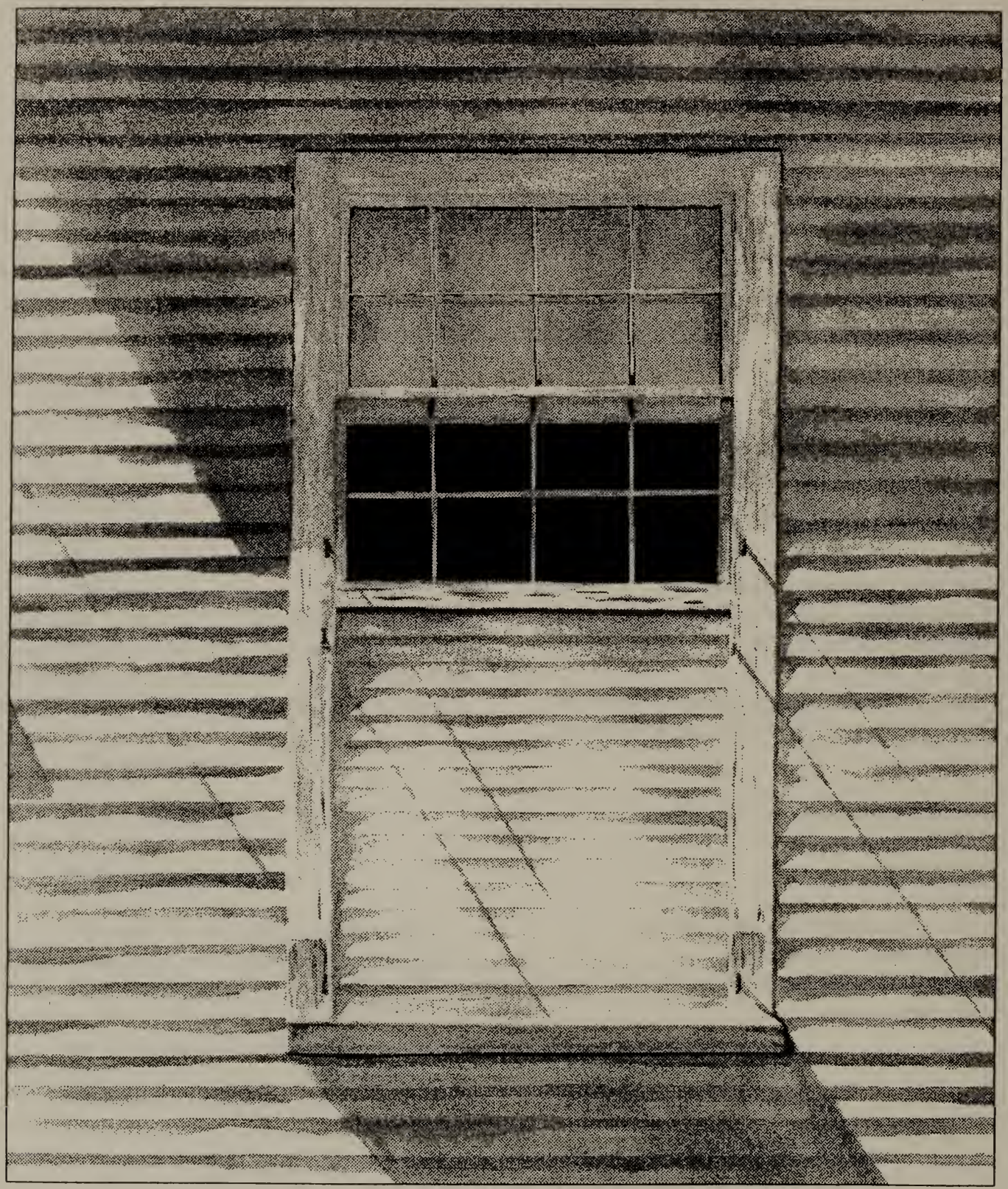
I long to light the empty spaces,
To fill the black holes
Left behind.

I, too, have loved shooting stars
Whose brilliance brought me joy
And whose fire warmed me.

I know the loneliness of watching the flame-out
Or gentle fading of hosts along the Milky Way.

It is a feeling that even the desert night
In all its starry wonder
Cannot dispel.

For the omission of that one small star
Is greater still
Than the glory of a billion more
If that star belongs to you.



Matthew Daley

Swinging Door

Lee Nemmers

One hundred and some odd years ago,
fiery soup warmed friend and foe.

Breezy cap, man made of wood,
clutching kettle, bow-legged stood.

Skating figures huddled nearby,
sisters whispered, gentlemen sighed.

Sledded chair, blanketed maid,
night fall frozen, she's afraid.

Child-like gazing into fire,
hilltop doorway, dark as mire.

Beneath the cauldron, fire is lit,
upon the truth, retired sit.

After midnight wood man burns,
door swings open, steamed concerns.

Seated maid begins to soar,
blanket swallowed through the door.

Scarves, hats, mittens, all set sail,
empty cups and ladies frail.

Gents struggle against defeat,
doorway vacuums night's retreat.

Only left, a child, small friend,
sucked in too, and so,

The End.

Jason Derrick

ANXIETY

Mandy Smith

Waking from throat clenching nightmare, cannot open my eyes.
One solitary bead of sweat drips off my hardened brow.
Trying to calm shaking hands and continuous little sighs.
My mind is whirling, spinning, racing, driving me insane now.

Afraid to move, even to stir, frozen from memories in my head.
Running to escape fear, while still lying in bed.

Rico's Joy

MaryEllen Tribble

Rico sang as he sliced the provolone. His rich beautiful tenor voice filled the shop, rising high above the chatter of the customers and the ceiling fan. The Italian "nanas" stopped their bickering to listen. "Such a voice he has," said one. "If only his father was alive to hear him."

"Ah!" said another, "did you hear him at Mass last week?" nodding to herself. "Such a voice."

"He sings like a Caruso," added a third. "Such a voice. A mother could be so proud."

Smiling to himself at the comments, Rico continued to sing. He knew he had a fine voice, the same voice his father and Uncle Mario had. "Regalo, a gift," his mother had told him. "Share it, or God will take it away, caro." So Rico sang. He sang at work and at Mass. He would sing the arias he remembered from operas and, at home, sing for his mother mostly Italian love songs.

At fifty-six, much to his mother's disappointment, he was still unmarried. The nanas would try to fix him up with their cousin Sophia or an unmarried daughter, but Rico politely declined, continuing to slice the cheese, the pepperoni, the beef steaks above the chiaccheire in the shop. "Maria," one nana urged, "she is just right for you. Such a lovely face." Rico shuddered. Maria weighed over 250 pounds. They sent their daughters in, ostensibly to pick up bread or some freshly ground pork for the sausages they were making. Rico, as always, polite, smoothed out his clean white apron and waited on them, pretending not to understand their flirting.

Rico was "a catch." His thick, curly black hair framed his olive complexion. His eyelashes, almost too beautiful for a man, curled gracefully away from his dark brown eyes. Like his father, he was short and slightly stocky. His arms bulged from hefting the heavy meats to the slicer. Yes, Rico was a catch.

Much to his friends' amusement, Rico still lived with his mother. Frail and tiny, she continued to cook and clean for him. After all, she reasoned, he was her son. She lost her husband in W.W.II, and a brother in Korea. Her other son died in Vietnam. Rico was her life. Her brother-in-law ran the deli until Rico was sixteen. Then, his obligation complete, Uncle Guido disappeared to Florida.

No one thought to ask Rico what he wanted. He did well in high school and had many friends. One teacher urged him to continue on to college, but Rico declined, choosing instead to take his place at the deli. He never explained or apologized for his lack of ambition. While his cousins became dentists and lawyers and even one, a bookie, Rico firmly settled into the life planned for him. The nanas came in and bragged about their children, their grandchildren, but Rico, he was such a good son, such a help to his mother. Bonaccione. And how he sang.

Singing, he poured out his joy at work. At Mass, his joy drowned out the feeble sopranos. He would play bocci with the uncles, go to ball games with his friends, and every Thursday night, bowl. He proclaimed joy with each breath he took, exhaling the triumphant arias. But, as he sang, he grew aware of the longing within him that could smother his joy.

Late that summer, Rico's mother died, a peaceful death; quietly in her sleep, having spent most of her eighty-five years always working for others. At the funeral, Rico was strangely pensive. Almost happy his mother was at peace, but

somehow lost without her, he felt the beginning of a longing in him he didn't understand, now set in motion by his mother's death. Doing all the proper and necessary things, he arranged the wake and set up the huge collection of food at home and greeted cousins and friends he didn't even know existed.

Later on, he learned to cook rudimentary dishes, mostly pasta with canned sauce, not at all like the ones his mother made. But he went on.

When Rico turned fifty-seven, his friends threw him a surprise birthday party and hired a stripper to dance. Rico flushed crimson red. His friends, amused at Rico's embarrassment, teased him. When Rico finally arrived home that night, he made a decision. Taking out the morning paper, he read the personals. His eyes widened at some of the ads. Reaching for the drawer, Rico found a pencil and began to write an ad about himself. It took three tries before he was satisfied. Then, still doubtful, he went outside to post it.

Rico received many replies to his ad. He told no one of it, but secretly began corresponding with several who had answered. Finally, after weeks of letters flying back and forth, Rico made a choice. He found what he hoped was "THE ONE". Hands shaking, he picked up the phone and called Ashley. They talked for hours, laughing and sharing stories. Soon after, Rico wrote a short letter and arranged a meeting at Rico's home.

On the evening Ashley was to arrive, Rico took special care in his appearance. Brushing his hair until it shone, and brushing it again. He splashed on Old Spice. Trying on suit after suit, Rico finally settled on the navy blue one with the red tie. Opening a bottle of Chianti, he waited. Ashley. "I dream of Ashley with the long blond hair..." he hummed. Ashley, the beautiful, with the sweetest face he ever saw.

At 8:30, the appointed time, the doorbell rang. His heart almost pounded out of his chest with anticipation and fear. Rico opened the door. It was Ashley.

Six feet tall, blond hair and beard, Ashley was just about the most handsome man Rico had ever seen. Shyly, he gestured for Ashley to come in, quietly shutting the door. Rico stood like a small child, rubbing his toe into the worn carpet. Finally, he looked up. Ashley was smiling. Suddenly remembering his manners, Rico spoke, " I was afraid you wouldn't come. That you wouldn't want me." The crimson showed through his olive complexion. Ashley looked around, then turned to Rico with a gentle smile.

"You're just coming out, aren't you?" Rico nodded. Ashley put his hand on Rico's shoulder. "I hope it's O.K. for you. We don't bite." He placed a small box of mints on the coffee table. "Something smells really good," he remarked, shrugging off his coat. "What is it?" he asked.

"Just dinner," Rico replied. Rico smiled. He was happy.

Norwich Pool Leftovers - 1965

Cecilia Worth

Talking about "sink or swim" reminds me of the old deserted
swimming hole on the hot summer end of day when I
saw the boy sink out of sight beneath the water's
surface, his eyes staring at me expressionless as
he disappeared.

Was he kidding? Playing a prank or for real? Should I jump
and would he bob up laughing along with his
sisters on the shore, dancing with glee over having
played a good trick, me with dripping hair,
soaking sweat shirt and jeans? Screaming voices
stilled as the sisters watched, fastened their
eyes on me running, hovering on the dock.

Is he really ... can he swim or not?? Whereupon their
shrieking revived as though set off by a button
pushed to sound an alarm. The water so murky I
was afraid I'd never find him, like old nightmares
of my children toppled over the sides of row
boats, disappearing into opaque endless depths.

So I jumped ... no dive, which would face me towards the
bottom which he hadn't reached yet. I jumped,
pasted my eyes to the exact spot from which he'd
sunk, the last spot where he had bobbed up one
more time, and I jumped, eyes connected
forever with that spot and never losing focus even
under water, so that when I surfaced I was still
looking at it.

And when I got there, treading water like a unicycle, and
reached down through that spot on the still
surface, expecting to move my head in after my
arms - slow diving like a gander tipping in
gracefully for a mouthful of weeds all the way
down to who knows where - he was there.
Amazingly, disturbingly, just below the surface,
miraculously, horrifyingly, invisible as
a fetus in a womb, floating silent, motionless.

My fingers slid alongside his head, brushed his floating
hair. And fearing that he would slide from me,
slipping like an oiled eel - always the finale in
my nightmare, the children lost, sinking down
forever beyond my outstretched arms - I grabbed his
ears.

No Red-Cross-certified professional, I grabbed the little
shells, pinched them...wasn't it enough that he
was drowning? The indignity of being rescued by
the ears...and hauled him up. A frail old lady
could have done it...only a few inches
between life and death, between breath and death.

I looked into his face, noses almost bumping, treading water
still, when my feet grazed something slimey,
stringy, soft...the bottom? Letting down slowly
into gently stirring mud, I was standing,
chin on the water's surface. Time shifted,
animation restored, tension and drama evaporating
to reveal two silly people staring at each other,
strangers in the water.

I swung him over, still by the ears, twelve inches perhaps,
where he could stand. You can walk, I said, you
can touch, walk out to the shore. An almost miss,
one step walking into the pond, one step down a
deceptively gentle incline and you may slide just
far enough under the surface to breathe water if
you are a fish, to down if you are not and cannot
swim.

A miss is as good as a mile on a summer day in a pond
unguarded, officially closed due to drought.
Their home a shack on a bare hillside, the mother
watched our procession, dripping lady, shivering
son, solemn sister faces. I don't think she ever
got it, just saw a punishment, a judgment looming

Corinne Young

Scott Hurd

King of the Yard

Teresa L. Broyer

Each morning I creep
to the window sill
Trying my hardest
to be very still.

They are there again,
perched high on a wire,
Causing the end of my tail
to flit with desire.

Hopping about so wild
and free,
Tittering and tattering
and teasing me.

How I long to step
through this window so clear,
For as king of the yard
it is I they would fear.

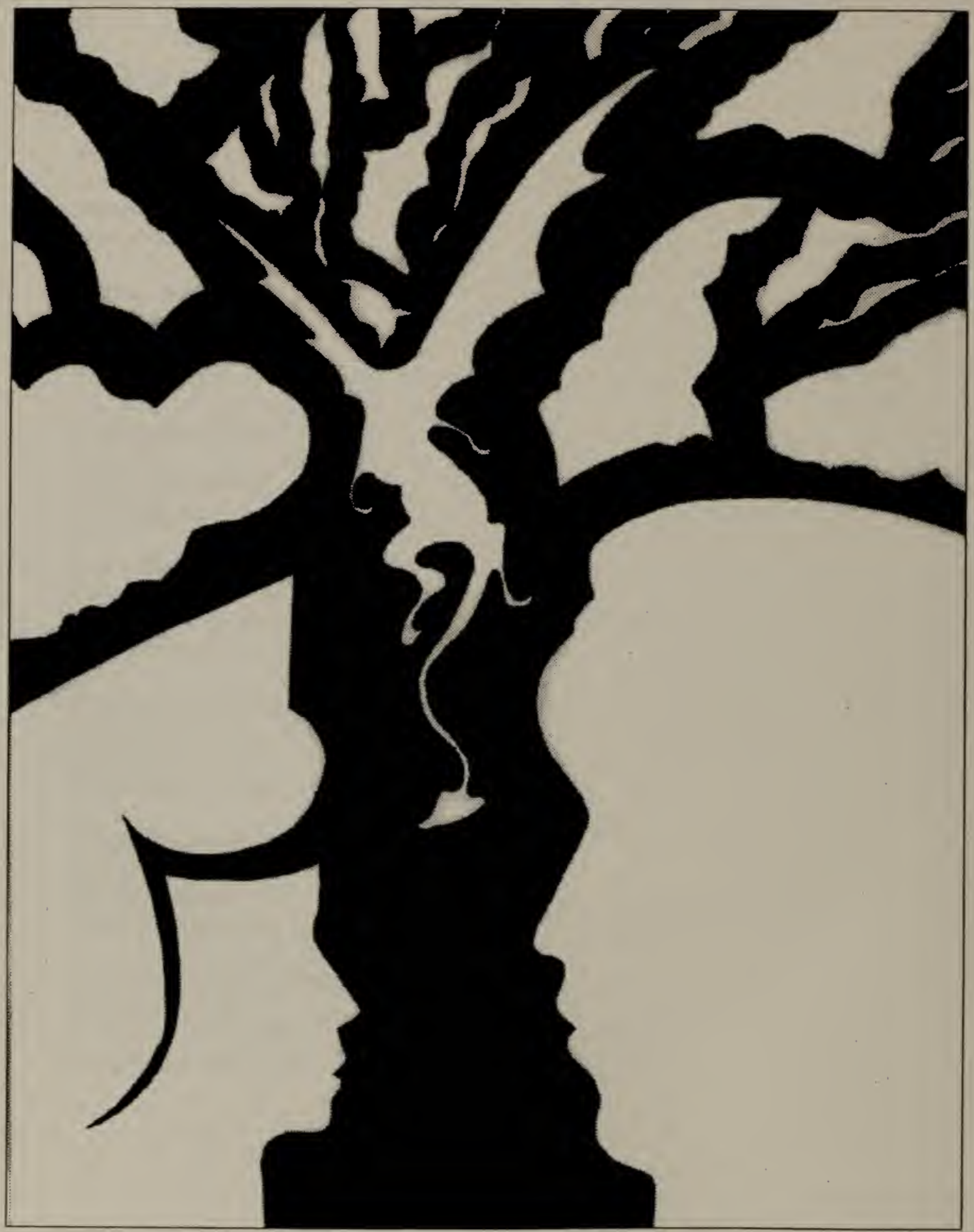
I'd stalk and I'd pounce,
making them scatter,
And take secret pride
at their nervous chatter.

Prowling the tree tops
and under the bush,
Hearing their calls
and knowing they wish

That I was not quite so fierce
and agile and sleek,
For they know it is them
upon which I would sneak.

Each morning I creep
to the window sill
To dream again
of the fear I'd instill.

But at last my domain
shall wait for me,
For I am just a kitten,
you see!



Jacqueline Rockwell

The Return

Bill Rutherford

I recalled the first time. It was September. I was a college freshman at Cape Cod Community College. My entire adult life was before me and I wanted to become a writer. But at eighteen, like a bud on a tree, I was naive and immature. I went because high school was over. I went because my friends were going. I went, I just wasn't ready. I jumped out of my wading pool of a nurturing, strict home, slipped into my own apartment and high dived into the community pool of college life.

My serious intentions were reserved for Saturday night parties and improving my bowling league average. Every Sunday I was religiously hung over. After much practice, I bowled my first two hundred game late in the semester. I rarely did my homework and skipped too many classes. It was all out of character, but I floundered in a sea of options. Eventually I drowned in the freedom; by December I was working a full time day job.

Time passed, but I always carried the thought to someday return. My life blossomed since then. I found love and married a beautiful person to share my life. I watched the birth of my son and then my daughter. I made a career and reveled in responsibility. I watched my hair recede across the top of my head. I bought a new car and then another. My thirties went. I was at the bridge of forty. Always the late bloomer, I reflected on my direction.

Looking back over the courtyard, I was in awe of how similar it was to my memory. The sparsely wooded area, interwoven walkways that carried students to their dreams. There was the familiar backdrop of the North and South buildings. It was a sight that welcomed and filled me. As I walked the bridge at the north end of the Commons, I noted the once flawless cement was patched, showing both its age and mine. I weaved my way back to the book store. The entrance doors were shut and a line was formed in anticipation of them opening. I took my place, sandwiched amidst students twenty years younger. Another might have felt ill at ease, but I was not. For me it was the right time.

My Return to the Realm of Learning

Joseph Polito

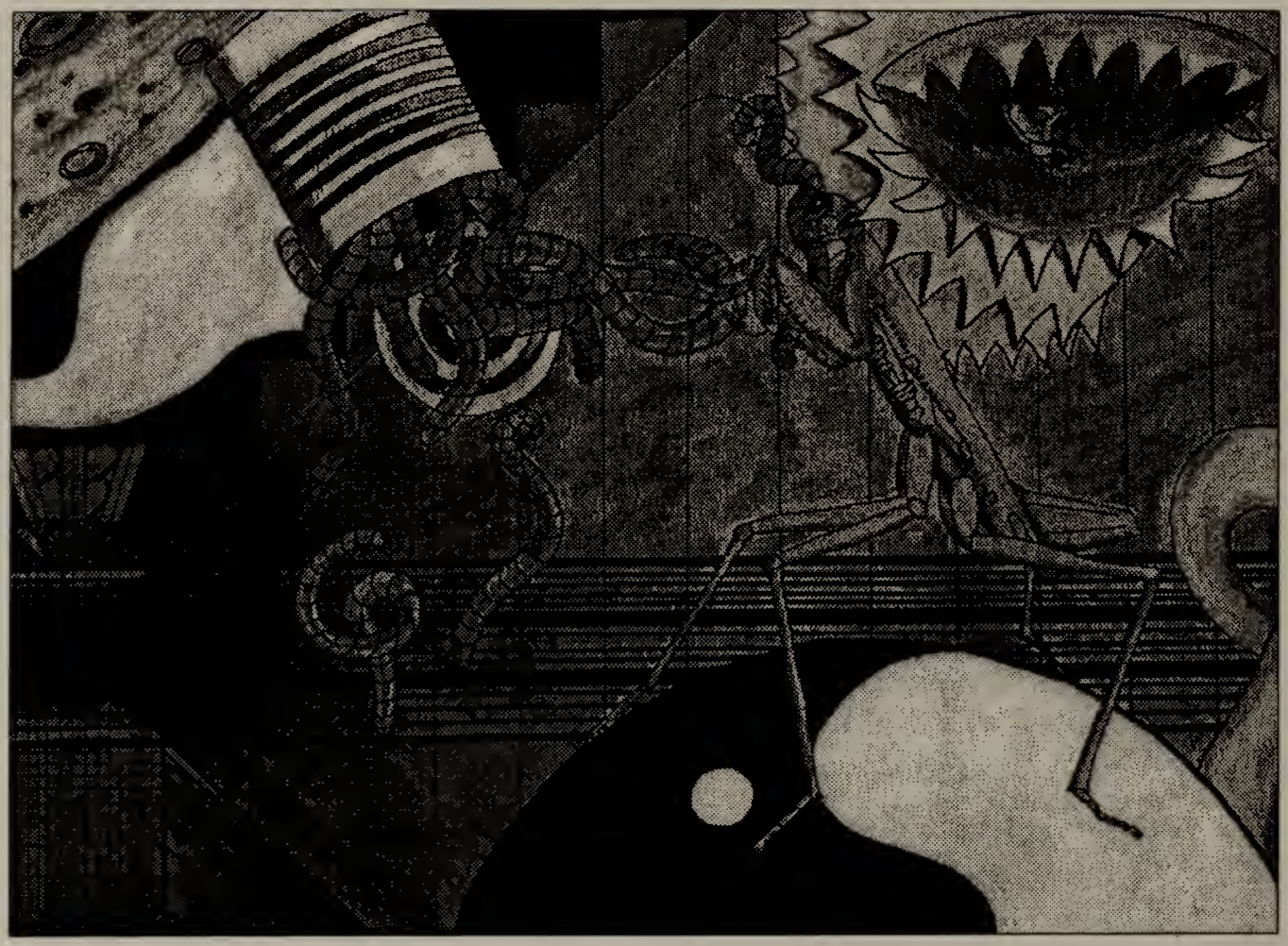
This assignment was going to be a tough one. I knew that from the very outset. For one, it is difficult to pinpoint one trait, one event, significant or otherwise, that can be hammered down to fit into the space of a mere two pages. Two, how do you write about something personal within your life without conveying it in the same manner as a book report? That just bores people to death. As a solution to the first dilemma, I have chosen something recent and fresh in my mind; my decision to return to school. As for the second problem area, we will just see what I can muster up.

First off, I will tell you right away that my decision to get back into school was not born out of some moment of intense thought, some grand and startling epiphany. It warped into more of a progression from one thought process to another. I was sitting at the dinner table. I can say that much for my decision was made with meat and sauce dripping off the tines of my fork and almost with a profound sense of relief. I remember having a conversation with my parents that called to mind some of the things that were sore spots at that point in my life. My job resembled something like purgatory on earth; I was weighted down by everything around me but perhaps the item of concern that pushed me into solid, unflinching action was the realization that I had not written in a very long time. That became the crime that I punished myself for. Unforgivable! Something that I used to be skilled at but, more importantly, enjoyed doing beyond most everything else, was conspicuously absent from my daily routine. This space needed to fill itself again. There are a lot of things that I can forgive myself for doing, but what I cannot do (and will not, to this day) is excuse the laziness, sloth, if you will, that brought about the stagnation of my writing. For lack of a better phrase, I desperately needed to get back into the game.

I won't lie to you. It took me quite awhile to get the old posterior in gear. It had been sedentary far too long to appreciate the effort that I was making. Then there was fear. I had been relishing the role of a high school graduate and was now entering an environment that held no familiarity for me. Like most people, I'm not keen on possessing the feeling of imminent and perhaps certain failure. The image of a large, gaping maw suddenly snapping shut around me then spitting my bones into a heaping pile of corpses kept roaring through my head with runaway speed. Symbolic? Nah! While fear worked its way slowly through my psyche, I quickly realized that I was also hampered by something less abstract but far more insidious; laziness. Good God, the dread of having to WORK, that is work in the truest sense, was frightful. I was going to have to work for a good grade. Ugh! I coasted with great ease throughout my high-school tenure, never having to put forth much in the way of effort. An "A" was certainly obtainable for me, hell, I even managed a few, but in general my mind-set fashioned itself into a machine of complete and utter ambivalence with respect to the entire grading process. Dearest readers, I state fully and without regret that I could not have given , even if lured with a hefty cash payment, a rodent's furry and wriggly behind what my grades were. After all, I was too busy conforming to the rigid stereotypes of Generation X. Fortunately this weakness has now been converted into strength.

Early on, one moment clearly sang to me and told me that I had made the right decision. It occurred even before I set a single foot sole into a classroom and before any writing assignment bore my name. Lounging in a chair during the curious phenomenon that is college orientation, I looked around me; taking in the cheerful clamor of the

auditorium, smelling the long-painted cedar blocks that the side walls were constructed of and in general fleshing out my opinion of the 4Cs, it occurred to me that I had shed my fear and intimidation over the prospect of school. College ceased being an enigmatic entity and suddenly, without warning, it transformed into a force that beckoned me with the promise of pealing off an unwanted layer of myself and in its place, building a glittering coat of armor that would deflect any amount of negativity that attempted to creep in and sabotage this experiment of mine. This may perhaps sound more than a little cloying but it was relieving to finally know for certain that within me there existed the need and desire for something that was not readily available, something that required more self-discipline than I had ever before encountered. Without any realization of having done so, I was growing into the role of an eager student, willing to make any effort needed to prove to myself that college was indeed something embracing for me, something that wordlessly said to me " Joe, this is most definitely where you belong." Those words, as far as I can see, spoke the truth, because never during my brief college career have I looked upon my decision with regret or doubt. Come to think of it, I am ashamed to say that it took me four years from the time I graduated from high school to take this step because there is nothing else right now that holds sway over the Cape Cod Community College.



Jacqueline Rockwell

Unexpected Adventure

Josh Thrope

A young man is seen in the middle of a valley. He is digging ferociously through the dirt, using an iron shovel to lift piles of sand. He remembers sitting on the bow of his sailboat and how comfortable he was as the bow crashed triumphantly through the rolling ocean waves.

Sailing the high seas in search for this lucky tropical island of paradise is a voyage I have been putting off for years. But I never expected it to be my destiny. After befriending the spirit of courage and making the necessary arrangements to cut myself free from the routine of the conventional working world, I built a sailboat and packed it solid with the necessary amenities to satisfy my health for at the very least, a few months. But my mission is not just to take a joyride across many oceans, but rather to embark on a solitary expedition to find a treasure, which the history books constantly refer to, but fail to reveal any detailed information. Packed safely in my bags is a map which will serve as the key to find the forgotten riches.

The young man thinks that he never would have even thought about pursuing this treasure if he had not been walking along a sidewalk in the city on a clear summer night, instead of just cruising around in his car.

I didn't have a companion that clear summer night. I remember walking along the street and hearing music which had the distinctive sound of crisp strummin' rhythm and blues. As I walked around a dim-lit corner, that's when I met the man who gave me the reason to seek out the long forgotten fortune. He looked so cool as he sat on his stool playing tunes with his back arched and his head peering up to the stars in the sky.

The man kept playing as he began to speak to me. "Hi ya doin' tonight, sonny," he said. "Now what's a good boy like you walkin' the streets all alone for?"

I wish I could have sounded more grown-up when I gave my answer. "I'm not alone tonight. In fact, I'm going to meet my buddies up the road. We're gonna rock the house real hard," I told him.

"Hey that sounds real nice," he said. "You know something, sonny, I've been playing out here tonight for a long time and you're the first person who has stopped and shared a few words with me."

I was relaxed when I replied, "Hey no sweat, I like the way you play."

The sharp-dressed man accepted my words with a smile. Then abruptly, he stopped tinkering with his instrument and reached into a satchel next to his feet. After digging deep inside a bag, fumbling around anxiously through an assortment of papers and things, he pulled out an object resembling a cylinder. Then gradually, his toothy grin changed to a serious expression which gave me the chills. I reached for the object and he swiftly pulled it back to his chest. As he began to speak, his tone sunk. "Young lad, what I am about to tell you will change your future. In my hands is a map, which if used correctly will enable you to never have to worry about the well-being of you, your family or friends ever again. You have been chosen to find the lost treasure that the historians don't like to talk about." And then he pointed to a string of islands just below the Florida Keys, right in the path of the equator, and got the message across real clear that this was a solitary journey. "But just remember, this is a special quest which only allows one passenger at a time, so remember, you must go alone! No one can accompany you. This exploration will only succeed as long as you travel by yourself!"

The boy quickly snaps out of his dream, throws the

shovel aside and reaches down into the sandhole in high hopes of clutching a magnificent treasure chest dripping with gold and jewels. Suddenly, he hears a sound in the distance which temporarily disrupts his sweaty anticipation.

As I scan my eyes through the trees hoping to spot a curious animal and not a poacher who accidentally gave away his position, I see the image of a silhouette brush by the bushes then disappear. My first reaction is indeed fear. I have no idea that my search across a hot, dry and sandy desert, over several rocky and steep mountains, and through a dense forest, thick with Eucalyptus trees covered with moss and growing large in murky swamps, would be accompanied by another person who is ready to stake a claim on my stash. I think whoever this person is they had better just stand clear of progress. I've been the one using this map to navigate the right path of success for the lost pot of gold, so I feel strongly about taking the initiative of digging it up, and hoarding it like farmers who are proud of their prized vegetables.

So I come to grips with the situation and stand strong in front of the intruding spy. I grab my shovel, stand up, and project my voice, "I know you can hear me out there. I'm only gonna say this once. Get lost! I'm warning you whoever you are, I know how to use this shovel. That's right pal, to you it's a digging tool, but to me it is a weapon of death. Come any closer and I start swinging!" And just as I start to move closer towards the bushes, I feel a cool breeze catch my attention, and as I turn around taking my instincts most seriously, I open my eyes in amazement at this glowing figure levitating above the ground, smiling and staring at me just a few strides away. "Holy shit!" I say to myself. "Who are you?" I ask.

The figure says, "I am Zora, princess of the moon people. I cannot help but laugh at your courage to find what is beneath the sand. Go on, keep digging little boy, you will be surprised to see what you find."

And as I brush away the sand at the bottom of the hole, my hands come across a hard piece of metal. After scraping around its edges, a shape resembling a helmet gradually appears. Indeed, I am perplexed! So, I turn around and face the glowing woman floating before me and ask, "What's this? Someone's metal hat is the secret? The great source of my financial stability?"

The fairy smiles and answers, "What you see may not be what is there. Perhaps he should keep digging until he can dig no more!"

I can't believe this. She expects me to dig all the way around this hunk of metal. I guess I have no choice, but to dig until this entire piece of metal is revealed.

After several hours of thrusting the shovel deep into the sand and hurling large chunks of sand off to the side, the treasure comes into full view. Resting on a platform before him at the bottom of a huge hole stands a magnificent statue of a knight in full body armor. Suddenly, as the fairy sprinkles magic dust that sparkles throughout the entire statue, a loud rumbling is heard, then a thick puff of smoke blows through the entire hole, and when the smoke clears the statue is opened, like a vampires coffin leaning against a wall. The boy steps back with his jaw hanging down and his eyes stretched wide.

Zora says, "It looks like a knight, yes? Well this is a special knight. Step inside and request to go anywhere in the world. But it does not have to be in the same time you are living in now. You are welcome to visit any place you wish during the

chosen time. You can ask to be right alongside the first astronaut to land on the moon, or see the pharaohs of old ruling their kingdoms. But remember, wherever you go, if you take off the armor you will be forced to stay in that time forever."

The boy asks, "Are you coming with me, Zora?"

Zora answers sweetly, "No. I am afraid not. This is an adventure which you must take on your own."

The boy slowly steps up onto the platform, looks at the tips of the trees waving steadily with the breeze, and positions himself inside the metal encasement and closes the frame hard.

Mysteriously, Zora asks, "So where would the little boy like to go?"

The young man looks at her with the most satisfied look on his face and says, "Anyplace where they won't call me 'little boy'."

Denis Pundik

Mad Dogs and Hush Puppies

Joseph Canney

The commercial is about 30 years old and shows a hillbilly type with tattered, cut-off jeans, a sleeveless shirt made the hard way, and bare feet. When he discovers Hush Puppy shoes, he drawls this proclamation: "Mah dawgs cun breathe; Ah cun go ta schoowel; Ah cun be somebahdy!"

Did you ever wonder how some people get to be somebodies and others get to be nobodies? Is there a fork in the road plainly marked: "somebody," and "nobody"? Did we not all start the precious first seconds of life down the road to "somebody;" holding hands with the warm and loving heart that pumped life sustaining nectar through our veins? Most of us start down this path and occasionally make a misstep, but we are transported over each and every obstacle by a guiding force like so many wavelets down a gentle brook. And like flowers that bloom because of the patient hand of spring, we continue to grow, hearing only the soothing patter of quiet rain on our leaves. This is the preferred journey through life. This is the one that we embark upon with the mixed emotions of a chirping young eaglet, feeling exhilaration at being noticed and trepidation at trying out new wings. Just like the young eaglet, we are able to grow and soar to unimagined heights, simply by hearing the vocal and silent peeps of encouragement from those around us.

If this is how we start and this is what we want, then how do we find ourselves on the fork towards "nobody"? How do others whom we meet along the way, convince us that we are not on the right path and trick us into changing our direction? They subtly chip at our foundation with a raised eyebrow, hands on the hips, a narrowed glance, or pursed lips. If our house of self esteem does not crumble, they increase their arsenal of destructive assaults. "Is that necessary," "are you sure," "what is wrong with you," "don't you know any better," they hiss. Not content to simply tear down our cottage of happiness and dreams, they also want to level the land. So they escalate further, "you make me sick," "that stinks," "you must be stupid," "don't bother me," they shriek.
Finally, facing inclement emotional weather with no place to live, and unsure of our choice, we reverse direction and head down the path to "nobody". In a blurred moment, we cease soaring like an eagle and instead cower and cover up like an oft-beaten dog. Our life suddenly changes like the seasons, and instead of awaiting springs of hope and summers of growth, we face long autumns of disappointment and interminable winters of shunted promise.

Therefore it is our responsibility, not only to remain on our proper chosen path, but also by our actions and words to guide and encourage those coming behind us. We must ensure that we nurture and sustain them with the protein of praise. "I like it," and "good job," should be their daily bread. "Nice going" and "I'm proud of you" should be the crystal clear water from which they drink. If we do this, we will ensure ourselves of a blooming world perpetuated with blue skies, high tide, and green grass.

Shelia Bucchino

Dark Tents

John Glorioso

The chirping of the crickets
Breaks the heavy night air.

Two lovers sit in stony silence
Not a word is muttered.

Upon a little plastic table
The momentum of a clock dredges forward.

Ticking away the moments of life
Now forever buried within eternity!

A male absorbed in nothingness
Casts a glance towards the Female.

His gesture rings meaningless
For nothing is returned!

He begins to think in sorrow
To his life of years before.

Yes, the happiness of that period
Seems so unrealistic now!

He wonders how things got so crazy
Thinking if he'll ever get back on track.

Get off the blood stained tracks
Where his remorse lies so heavily!

The Female looks coaxingly
To her counterpart within the darkness

Sending shivers up her spine
Within the cooling night air.

In dark tents the night is spent
Moving onward to forever being lost

In dark tents their love is spent
Trying to catch up with the cost!

Simona Tarakeviaute

EDEN

Patricia Allen

Sister, serpent
You breathed music at our parties
drank demurely less than us
the curve of your sanguine breast
sanctified,
a temple.

You kissed us
transcended our familial innocence
and we held you in the racking, writhing rites of possession
absorbed your fragrant, caustic venom
mesmerized at your devotion.

You coiled yourself about us
lulled us with your mourning songs,
then summoning the mystery of the narrow multitude,
you cleaved the Earth from its axis
and mirthless in the vague heavens
willed the dark, enemy Sun
to weep for you.

Janet Thornton

The Zone of Separation

Allison Cappella

The zone of separation
kept more than just themselves apart
in many ways
it kept apart their ongoing lives

pleasantly dividing the day, the house,
the activities, even the meals
but it failed to make things better
or regulate the surging waves of frustration

those waves would make themselves
readily available at awkward times
and threaten the established truce
and even defy the couple's ground rules

the zone was to be heavily guarded
especially at family gatherings
and those odd moments with mutual friends
when warm thought entered quietly

the arrangement lasted longer
than the participants could take
and broke down only when
the facade became more real than they

at which time their lawyers
promptly divided the estate
leaving what to gather
and whose life set straight?

The Circus Miami Airport

Janet Thornton

Cuban cigars perched on full active lips
In animated delivery of foreign sounds
Urgent and simultaneous
Communication
A cacophony, unheard and unstopped

Harsh lights reflected in oversized watches
Jeweled earrings displaced by chewing gum
Overfed travelers shifting
To find comfort
Amid an assortment of copious bags

Restless children mirror the range of emotions
Clutching plastic toys and spilling colored liquids
A circus of senses
Touring, in full costume
Re-enacting a perpetual performance

GRANDMA'S

Pebo Bohannon

My cousin's coat smelled of baby puke. Even though the sleeves were short and the hem high, my grandmother made me wear it. "Be grateful you got clothes and food and a roof over your head," she'd say in a sharp, chilly voice, her face all wrinkled and sour-looking.

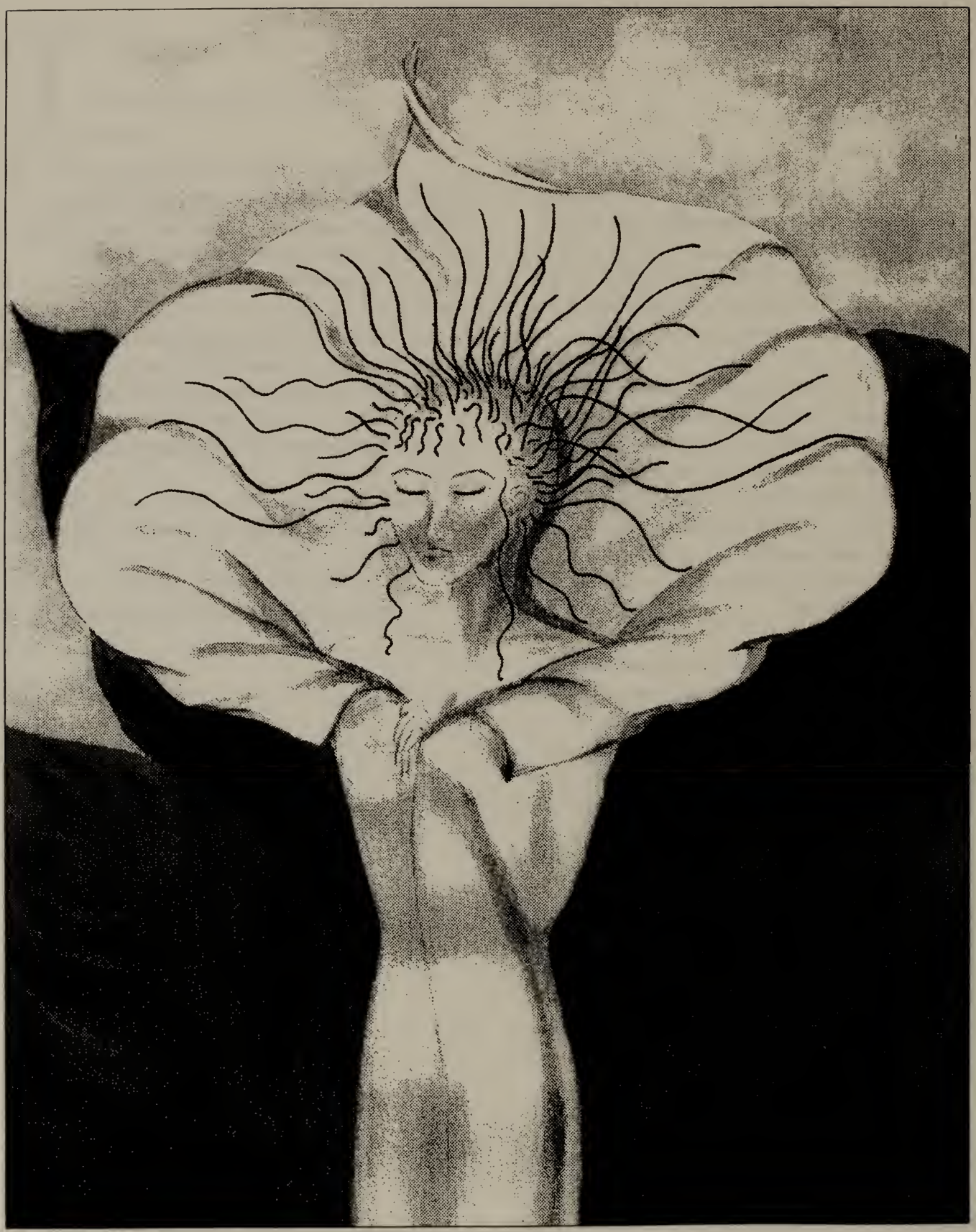
I shivered in the icy air waiting for the library to open. I stood on the library step, hopping up and down on the spidery crack. *Step on a crack, break your mother's back* the pretty girls sing-songed after school, hop-scotching down the street towards home. I walked behind them, picking up yellow and orange and red leaves and throwing them into the air, watching as they whirled and twirled to the ground.

The coldness bit at my ears, and I twisted my dry lips into funny shapes. Tilting my head up to the milky sky, I whooshed breath from my mouth, expecting donut rings and flying saucers. Nothing happened, though. The air came out a fuzzy white, hovered near my nose and disappeared.

I stamped my feet in the tight scruffy shoes my cousin's mother had given to me, trying to stay warm. My toes felt thick and wooden. I worried they'd freeze and snap in half like stringbeans. I was eager for the huge wooden door to open, for Miss Grove, the librarian, to usher me inside into the warm book-lined room. She would fuss over my red cheeks and nose and make me hot chocolate with tiny marshmallows.

There were two windows way up near the top of the door. I wished I had wings, for I'd fly up and peek in the glass or tap on it with a pencil so Miss Grove would know I was waiting outside in the awful cold.

I hadn't noticed the darkness creeping in around me until lights began coming on in the neighboring houses. The library remained as hard and still as a statue; lifeless. I would have to go back to my grandmother's little house with its rented rooms and empty walls. We lived only a few blocks away but as I walked, pins pricked my frozen feet and the frigid air numbed my short brown hair. For I walked slowly, wondering why the library was closed, missing the inky smell of the books, and longing for the warmth of Miss Grove's welcoming voice.



Sandra Reardon